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OUTPOSTS

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KENNETH SEVERS

The Wanderer

SETTING out, the traveller finds that time
And space identify, and that his wheels
Or airscrews serve no purpose but their own :
The splintered wreckage in the sand, the stop
High in hills, garageless, no inns about,
Leaves him unchanged, and at the final shore—
The last airfield of a ruined continent—
He unpacks his conscience and his gun; alone,
Debates his destiny again. Riders in peril pass
For whom the plain's great nights are keen, the sea's
Foaming at dusk a conflagration. Their faces
Bear the wind's touch, and their naked thighs
Wounds of an ever open destiny;
Their hooves' thunder in the crumbling hills
Sounds before sleep, loud in the hired room.

Sleeping, he returns; dreaming, he may find
Familiar paths : the lighthouse in the bay
Still shines and turns, signs to ships their port,
And the beach is peopled with bathers :
Shining girls and brown boys breathless in combers.
Exile's part : shading on dunes his eyes,
Memory seeks order, array of noons
Long slept through meaning; now he will cry word
Like bird call falling wide across waves
And hear the sea's return; bent, rise in sun,
Renewed, plunge weeping, deep in green breakers.

Light falsifies. Heat dies. Emerging, sea
Recedes and bathers gasp in the tide; from his cries
He wakes crying, drowned in the cloudy dawn.
Beyond his windows, under broken cooling towers,
The crowds assemble, and lorries breast the hills,
For the dead, it is proclaimed, must burn
In petrol pyres in distant fields, unclaimed,
Maimed, unrecognized. Like years
The gears slip sighing through empty valleys.
Now he turns and waits, for soon the fool-
ish dull brown waiter will appear, and his past
Will rattle like a tea cup at the door.
Journey's end : destiny and guns : his bag is bare.

BRIAN MERRIKIN HILL

From *Variations on the Eclipse of the Moon*

V. Passage Through Reality

BECAUSE the fabled horn was thought to cure
the madness in the real heart, they urged
that she should wait beside the spring whose pure

blue water mirrored her dark hair, submerged
like nereid foliage near her shaded face,
echoing the rock by which the pool was verged.

So half asleep she felt her fingers trace
the rippled outline of herself, until
she dreamed him into being. Yet the pace

of that swift flight from those who sought to kill
shattered his imaged form beside her own :
awake she saw escape beyond the hill

the real beauty she had never known
out of that dream. She thought the men had said
they would not harm him, yet she heard the groan

with which he vanished when they found her dead.

RONALD BLYTHE

Emily Brontë

SLATE, sleet and the mythical rock
Raised hands against her.
The cold things of the earth rose up,
Chilling her flesh, and would
Have entered her quiet places
Bringing the white bird of her spirit
Down to dash among the stones.
But, bearing strange shields
To her dwelling amidst the graves,
She assumed a cruel strength, when,
At night, she fled the parsonage lamps
To walk in darkness on the squally heights.

Her violent lovers rising when the sickly sun
Lanced the first dull bar of dawn,
Left her with her wild hair wet and riven,
And the ever hated impediment of dark, drenched skirts.
But the white bird of her spirit had broken free
And the words she gathered from the moor,
She wrote and treasured, as the promised cycle
Brought another day, that had to be lived through.

RONALD BOTTRALL

Variations on a Theme of Pound

VI. The Quorn Revisited

THERE are few who recognize the huntsman in us
Carefully concealed behind the striped trousers
And the neat black coat, but when he strikes
He is accurate and cruel as the shrikes
Or the butcher-bird that hangs his victim on a bush.
Perhaps he will prefer to play a cannon off the cush
Before finally potting the stupid clerk
Or the compromised son of Lord Shark;
But in the end he kills, and how he enjoys it
And so does the London Safe Deposit
Where he provides for the future well-being
Of his dear little children—can't you see them skiing
Down the slopes towards the exclusive hotel
Nicely behaved and as well-spoken as Alvar Lidell?
The huntsman whispers his view halloo
So softly that one could hardly suspect him of saying Boo
To a goose if one hadn't noticed the flecks
On his lapel that come from bleeding the Hon. Shell Mex.

MONTAGU SLATER

An Elegy

written in the shadow of a mountain in a northern mining port which was established in the 19th century but proved superfluous to the needs of the 20th.

WHEN the last candle of the day gives over
Its conflagration of the quivering air
And riven curtains of the west discover
Endless tranquillity projected there :

And the sun drowns in continents of wests,
Earth, redolent of shadow, never free
From sun's corrosion, till his lusty breasts
Touch the horizon of a menstrual sea :—

Mountain, whose rondure is determinate
By riches of your still unshafted mines,
Chambers and galleries and caves intestate,
A various hoard which every twig divines :

The glimmering presence of your urgent Jove,
Your shoulder hummocking above the screes
Where smoky clouds bend daylight as it moves
To closure in imperfect cadences

Tells how an earthquake had once split the rock
And giant sparks, leaping the centuries,
Found the dead shafts and mines of human thought
And legends of imaginary countries.

* * *

Our little lives, our chapels and our hymns,
Mining and fishing—apostolic round—
A tidal river governed with its whims;
Neap tides renewed but spring tides broke the bounds.

Once, annually, our men forsook their trade,
Hired wagonettes to where ascent begins,
Climbed through the night to ambuscade
The earliest secret of the rising sun—

To see the inhuman world open its eyes;
Screes at their feet and laminated shale;
Behind their backs more Cumbrian mountains rose
And at their feet the glimmering peaks of Wales.

And then returning to their normal lives
Found that their minds were overshadowed by
A memory of the mountain, and their wives
Discovered in them puzzling sympathy.

* * *

Now, solemn, the precedent shadow falls,
Like disintoxication, like dismay
Of clocks set going after drinking brawls
With unrelenting news of yesterday.

And down the dream-choked gullet of the street
Backwards, on an ambiguous journey led,
We read in all the faces that we meet
Stale news, a preterite of the nearer dead.

And being mindful of the twilight mood
And the grave charm of the alternate note,
The lyric burden of this solitude,
Satyricon for any golden throat;

We hold the drowsy magic of the form
Till the full cycle of the song disposes
That voices rhythm-cheated of the norm
In the old dark repeat the older closes.

And touch, which is the lover's sense, implies
A membrane's pleasure when a last bird sings
Of night's deep-scented guesses, and the eyes
Resign their kingdom over visible things.

LOUIS JOHNSON

How Do You Most Survive?

HOW do you most survive?
obscuring your face under the frame
of whatself? writing the name
on a wall to return and look
at its permanence as would a book
give your name back, assert you live?

Hiding also your face
turning the eyelid away from the flame
of the house you burned, with shame
cold as a chrysalis in the limb
where no desire can knowingly now climb
but face its limpness in a mute disgrace?

Hiding also your tears
and counting on fingers too many fools
you have made of yourself who feels
less shame and more of laugh as last
you know, under the winter sash the blast
insinuates that will impoverish years?

Where, where in the world
was that love-legend only a fable told
of lovers who knew enough to come out of cold,
recognize each in sudden spark of flesh,
wind permanence together out of each
they being real and nothing else lovely revealed.

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

Dandelion

THE gardener wars upon its golden prime,
But on the silver of its age-fluffed head
The gardener's children blow, to tell the time
And help their father's enemy to spread.

JAMES KIRKUP

A Man's Hand

A MAN'S hand will grow and shine
As a leaf opening from the packed seed.
In the opened palm the lines will bleed
With a new blood, a new sign.

Those fingers that like petals fell
On their own shadow, will remind
Memory of its uncertain sound
Deep as a wind among the trees of fall.

Man's life is the world's renewed eternities.
We have gone beyond where all beginnings end.
Who has ever sought, and loved, and found
A friend in any but himself, will seek to-morrow's skies.

ROGER EDWARDS

Pilgrimage

WHO will make the journey—who will believe
the whore made beautiful, the coarse skull laid
open beyond the bone, beyond brain, leaving love
like a wild and terrible angel cleaving
the archaic darkness within the wretched head?

For there are many journeys—who will take my hand—
who will believe me? I promise silence,
I promise one star and a green pool at the cave's end;
a tremulous beauty of lilies from our mingled mud,
fragrance in dark places, ability to balance

bitterness like a trinket in your tranquil hand
and I—but O! I hear the frost-far drumming
of an avalanche of stars. Whoever you are, lend
me your hand, your hand. It will be too late, for wind
is instantaneous about my head.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

Evening, Outside Auckland

THE late aggressive owl goes hunting
paddock and bank across the river
remitting sombrely from the downslopes
iterating cry, no song. Does he demand
or plead? Two notes, over and over,
while the night sky locks up in cloud
and still gathers silently towards rain.

Owl cry, and far in their distance heard
immense communicable sadness the freights'
hoarse whistle when none hears their wheels—
twin sounds by night, seeming to mourn,
one natural, one born of our mechanics.
We keep our bond with both.
Cry, my country,
your two voices under a silent cloud!

Seen, moonlight shadowing your valleys
across the Spiral, and seen the Ruahine,
heard then by the Kimberley bright in frost
and marked in midnight in the grave sea bent
pasturing Waipu, mourning my country
in sense always of the sea nor less the land,
landless and dilatory traveller, troubled
I went with a thousand to make a home
and had no assurance out of a still night.

By Pokeno cry one in the Bombay pockets
as the other raced dark upon the Waikato,
and the bird hung for a moment behind the pub
at Kaihu, the iron finds voice below,
below, the sky, rain closing, ever below.

I journeyed through the agonies of green
age from childhood into soldiering, to marry
image out of my grief but may not say peace
to doubled image troublesome to describe
with the words unworded of the bond we keep.

And the thousand of that like bond refine
each to his condition his sanction of images,
troubled by midnight broken by owl or train—
O communicable sadness, my crossed country,
do we speak to the night always out of silence?

How shall we know we plead, if we demand?

IRIS BIRTWISTLE

Dust to Dust

THE bubble dreams afloat at night
On morning's realist peaks explode
And lend no substance to the light.

The carefree rose scales up the wall
And sees greed's muckcart spreading slums
Her smoke-embezzled petals fall.

The golden seed upon the tongue
May raise a beanstalk through the gloom
Till frostbite critic's cut it down.

The wimple clouds that graze the sky
Are sheared by every raider wind;
They never reach a gentle fold.

The pygmy weed and brawny oak
Lie lion and lamb across the earth
When vandal tempest swaggers by.

The wooden schooner comes at last
From proudly navigated lanes
To rib faked beams in pseudo halls.

The glassy bell that cups the sea
Will splinter in the final boom
And snuff the beacon on the cliff.

NORMAN KREITMAN

Exodus

(For Dorothy)

WHERE once she sat her hungry chair
leers over the table of my face,
and calls the ghosts about the room
to stand within her personal space.

Where once she spoke, the loaded air
lies like a cloud about my head,
and the deaf walk by and never hear
her mixture of music and words unsaid.

Strangers come cold as wind from the streets
in the ordinary darkness of this day;
I burn alone, and watch my heart glide
from the wound in my side where once she lay.

CLARENCE ALVA POWELL

Nth Degree

WHO marvel least at love are most annoyed
With it : the shadow lengthens in the meadow,
And eldorado dies, the vision strengthens;
Desire, uncloyed, is rampant yet, and eyes
Reveal the inner kingdom : broken blood
Upon the mind, and thinking, too, in kind,
And flood of loss or state of feeling blind.

And debonair, and nonchalant, who toyed
With it : their losses alter them, their crosses
In stone or mosses sleep where spirits falter,
Pervade the void : who silently must weep
Inferno-hid and, feigning, shout with laughter
Against the heart, and play the subtle part,
And after love, and death—supernal art.

HENRY TREECE

H.

SO silence came again at last
Through the violet air. In slow pavane—
But gently, gently—the new-made dust
Settled across the jelling plain,
Then all was still. A shadow passed
And the hanging mountain-range had gone;
A cloud swirled up and then was lost
Over the hole where a sea had been.
Fur, flesh and feather; present, past;
Growth and decay—all now were one.

Old earth had shot his bolt, at just
A quarter to two in the afternoon;
And a marmoset left alive from the blast
Dumbly wondered what noise had grown
(As when to ear a shell is pressed
Or pulse sets tingling an empty room),
But abler than he would not have guessed
It was the chuckle of Outer Doom:
"Why should you think you were the first?
Consider the craters of the moon!"

JOHN CALDER

Over the Tomb

KISSES are as whispers
Over the grave
Floating on night winds
From the church's nave.
Where there echoes
The darling name
Is life in the stillness
Of death gone lame.
An answer comes
From the lovers' last bed
Passes and mingles
Where both are dead.

CHARLES MADGE

For an Altar

TOO many gods having to be placated,
Verdigris on the statues of the past,
Under their lids that they will never close
Glows in the cathode tube a greenish light

Great gods of law and infinitely small
Gods, deaths and transmutations whispering
Contrary counsels from their pediments
Gods of the hearth and tumults of the breast

And the stern signals of collective life
Immensely focussed on our trouble, vast
The possibilities, the nothingnesses,
They overlook us with too solemn eyes

Exacting sacrifice and making void
And spent the bloodstream and the smoking brand.

MERVYN LEVY

Last Will

SET my sun in the crossed
Sails of the sea
Along the coast of whales
Past Leonardo's rock :
Sew my eye like an emerald
In the dream of a seabird's wing.

Print my lungs with dapple green,
Open the valves of my swinging heart,
Strip my flesh as the ships roll by,
Breaking my limbs in their bread
And their wine.

REVIEWS

Seventy Cantos: Ezra Pound (Faber, 25s.).
Complete Shorter Poems: W. H. Auden (Faber, 15s.).
The Edge of Being: Stephen Spender (Faber, 7s. 6d.).
The Agamemnon of Aeschylus: translated by Louis MacNeice (Faber, 8s. 6d.).
The Voice of Poetry 1930-1950: edited by Hermann Peschmann (Evans, 8s. 6d.).

THE voices of poetry during the years from 1930 to 1950 have been many, their intonations and inflexions remarkably varied, and their listeners a fickle mob of floating-voters now apparently no more numerous than the stage "crowd" about Brutus's pulpit in the Forum. 1951 can scarcely make a final decision on the cogency of these voices, yet what can be said now is quite as important as what may be said in two hundred years, the vision of historians being so liable to foreshortening and distortion.

Firstly: the predominating voice of the period 1933-1940 was that of *il miglior fabbro.* In this country the compelling clatter of the *New Signatures* poets, and the slowly-developing appreciation of the Anglo-Catholic baritone, together seemed to cover up Pound's perpetual soliloquy, mixed as it was, at times, with traces of polyglot hysteria and unpopular economic and political bias. The first four volumes of the *Cantos,* now printed in one volume, deserve serious attention and a correct study in place of the hasty appraisement and giggling half-hearted approval they have excited up to now. It is true that Pound's readers cannot agree with him: they will never agree with him, any more than readers of eighteenth-century verse agree with Pope. It is true that the beautifully cadenced line becomes, in the end, as boring as blank verse or the rhymed couplet, no matter how skilfully the rhythms are varied. It is true that the use of so many quotations from other tongues—"They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps"—is an irritation, and the abstruse references are an annoyance to the reader who lacks the

> "new mythological machinery
> And very handsome supernatural scenery"

which it will take years of commentators to reduce to a concordance. And it is true that the word "draft" must be used to the end of time, since it is not likely that Pound will turn back now to

give the whole great poem the final polish and the clinching coherence it still lacks.

Secondly : certain other voices have deserved the attention they have attracted. It did not seem likely, in 1930, that one day there should be such figures as Professor Auden and Professor Day Lewis, and it still remains to be proved that

> "Private faces in public places
> Are wiser and nicer
> Than public faces in private places."

For all that, the charm of Auden's shorter poems is undeniable, lost though it may be without the groping for wisdom in the longer works. The variety of line, the pungency (even stridency) of image, the vigour of expression, the sense of complicated webs of knowledge somewhere in the background, the attention to such details of structure as the beginnings of lines (more noticeable in the earlier pieces), and the virtuosity of variation in technique, form, and manner : these are the work of a poet of some consequence. It can be argued that the politics have tarnished, the school-made incidents perished in the blitz when they were sent to Coventry while their author gambolled on the Great Gromboolian Plain, the catalogues are out of date for ever, and some of the attitudes, which once looked like marble statues, are obviously *papier mâché* feeling the weather. Something like this happens to all poets. The more objective suffer from the unambiguity of their writing : the more subjective get away with many a euphemism which becomes an unintended *double entente.* Auden, being (at least in his earlier works) objective and "extrovert", suffers for his very clarity, and the broken glass tinkles on a concrete pavement.

Thirdly : some voices have changed their intonations while retaining their inflexions. Few books have been so eagerly awaited as Stephen Spender's *Poems,* appearing early in 1933 : it was taken avidly and devoured. Yet Spender's voice faltered almost at once : two poems had disappeared when the second edition came out. Vienna attracted; he found himself for a while in the Still Centre; there followed Ruins and Visions; the necessity for Dedication he understood well. And in spite of all this turmoil and fret, these voyages and minor adventures, active participation in a war, and the friendship or acquaintance of almost every writer of importance, he remains on the Edge of Being, and blows the gaff on "the literary life", almost admitting himself lost between corrupting

success and narrowing failure. Possibly the whole of his work can be summed up in the poem *Awaking,* which was written gradually, short as it is, between 1930 and 1948, and which ends thus :—

> "The world's a circle where all moves
> Before after after before.
> Such joy my new-awaking proves
> Each day—until I start to care."

Fourthly : a voice here and a voice there were assisted by the undertones and overtones of an ancient culture. Apart from the constant seeking for parallels and contrasts in the past, in which Pound and Eliot indulged, and from Eliot's continuous and deliberate use of the Orestes legend, there was a desire for re-translation of the classics. This has not been carried far enough yet : it is to be hoped that some competent poets will turn their hands to it, rather than pretend to write original poetic drama. MacNeice's version of *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (first published in 1936) is a model for all modern translators—precise in transliteration, exact in image (symptomatic and interesting it was in 1935 to find his *Poems* with the motto—

διώκει παῖς ποταυοῦ ὄρυιν

which led to speculation even then), genuinely Greek and poetic in feeling, careful at the same time of his original and of the idiom of to-day : and his most successful attempt deserves many emulators.

Fifthly : proclaiming that his anthology is the very *Voice of Poetry* 1930-1950, Mr. Peschmann has missed a grand opportunity. How *can* Pound, American or not, be omitted from an anthology with such a title? There are many omissions, indeed, some of them wanton and unnecessary, and a very idiosyncratic choice of minors. It is possible to make an equivalent selection of lesser poets from those who do not appear here at all.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

The Immortal Home: J. K. G. Hoffman (Fortune Press, 6s.).
The Iron Harvest: Geoffrey Johnson (Williams & Norgate, 6s.).
The Season's Pause: W. J. Strachan (Secker & Warburg, 7s. 6d.).
Durable Fire: Joseph Joel Keith (The Decker Press, $2.00).
Poems 1938-48 : Noel Farr Hoggard (The Handcraft Press).
Poems from a Welsh Mountain: George Moor (A. S. Stockwell, 1s. 3d.).

ALL six books under review have one quality in common—mediocrity. By this I do not intend any disparagement. Each poet has offered of his best, has striven to express an individual and authentic vision of human experience and the world. But the vision and the expression are derivative, unoriginal and the poems belong to the broad flat uplands of literature not to the heights of genius and inspiration. It is good that such poets should write and publish and it is good that there is a public to receive their works if not with fervid acclamation then with quiet approval.

Geoffrey Johnson's work is perhaps the most accomplished, the smoothest, the most stimulating. He is aware of the importance of the poetic function and in his introductory poem speaks wisely and lovingly of the raw material of his craft, words.

> "Let me not fail them, our faithful English words :
> The stout plebeian Saxon, homely as herds,
> Wholesome as rain, as tangible as tools. . ."

And every poem in this short collection shows a careful if not inspired choice of language. He has also a surprising variety of theme, evidencing a wide interest in human situations and an awareness that is far from being parochial. If we yearn at times for daring flights of imagination, the startlingly appropriate and original metaphor, the arresting adjective, we are also grateful for the careful craftsmanship and calculated precision of his effects. There is a fine translation from the German of Rilke (*Autumn Day*) which would only suffer from part-quotation.

J. K. G. Hoffman has a talent that has not yet fully developed. It is still embedded in the more commonplace and imitable aspects of the poetic tradition. *The Immortal Home* is a series of well-turned and neatly contrived sonnets that fail to exert maximum effect because imprecision of perception too often blurs the final impression and the cliche falls where most we desire the telling phrase. The lyrics that accompany the sonnet-sequence are slighter

in significance and perhaps for that reason more satisfying. Mr. Hoffman's craft can sustain the lyric moment where it cannot yet bear the weight of philosophical significance. When he discovers that it is no longer meaningful to speak of "My singing heart like that ascending lark," when he has pruned away the dead brambles of traditionalism he should achieve a genuine and distinctive poetic style.

W. J. Strachan is a more experienced and accomplished craftsman though the contents and scope of *The Season's Pause* is disappointingly slight. He has given us a short collection of occasional poems, mostly descriptive of natural scenes bearing a slender emotional undertone, that charm, interest, amuse, at times even delight, us. They are in the best sense of the words magazine verses.

Very similar are George Moor's Poems *From A Welsh Mountain* and Noel Hoggard's *Poems* 1938-48. Both poets offer us brief interludes when something seen in passing, a memory or a mood, has moved the writer to short lyric flights. George Moor's *Country Bus* was particularly pleasing for the image of the daffodils dangling from a child's lap—

> "In the air hangs
> The scent of daffodils
> Golden cold kissing
> The warm legs of a child
> Stretched limp in repose,"

where the apposition of "golden" and "cold" is particularly effective in the context of the whole poem. Noel Hoggard grapples with more weighty themes within the brief span of his verses and reveals a serious attitude to modern problems, a determined sincerity in the face of the threatening catastrophe of war :—

> "O city of a thousand glittering lights,
> Throbbing relentlessly, forged of steel and mortar,
> Where is the sanctuary of a thousand delights
> Haunted not by shadows of global slaughter?"

J. J. Keith is an American writer who has developed a highly personal technique that combines the freedom of unmeasured verse with the occasional satisfaction of rhyme and cadence. The result is a series of poems easy to read and striking in the whole but because of their concinnity and restraint impossible to quote or remember by single lines or phrases. The little appraisal of Robert

Frost whose flat tone Mr. Keith often imitates affords a good example.

"He roughens his words
on the stony foundation of language,
his own words piled
in rocky imperfections;
he wittles with wit
the little sling of a word."

JOHN BARRON MAYS.

Spring Sowing: Pamela Constantine (Hodder & Stoughton, 6s.).
Music at Midnight: Muriel Grainger (Fortune Press, 5s.).
Pine Silence: Madge Hales (Fortune Press, 5s.).
The Wind on the Heath: Editha M. Kelly (Fortune Press, 5s.).
The Stricken Tree: Aubrey Lees (Privately printed, 1s.).
The Furious Finding: Frederic Vanson (Gemini Press, Derby, 6d.).

SYMPATHETICALLY, I have been through to reach an accurate appraisal of these "first-books"; and these comments are offered after careful consideration.

Miss Pamela Constantine, aged nineteen, infelicitously, is pregnant with the broods of adolescence. Using traditional patterns, she vaporizes the bright worlds of despair, ecstacy, longing, childhood, age, love, peace, tears, loneliness, death, time, sleep, eternity and dreams, dreams, dreams into a miasmal labyrinth of ghost-people and echoes. Delivered, Miss Constantine may now see with rinsed eyes a civilization itself seeking deliverance, and bring to it her woman's sympathy and strength, unless, of course, she prefers still to

". . . stand on the cliff and watch the years
Flow past. . ."

Miss Muriel Grainger's free and formal poems reveal maturity, confidence, responsibility and a working knowledge of the sacrifice that spells love. Daring yet trimphant, forceful yet tender, in her least-cultivated work, she strides to the van-guard of poets on whom present civilization indisputably depends. She also climbs to Tolstoi, Gandhi, Christ, but not by mentioning them, and in a snatch exclaims:

"Out! I will get out/I do not want solitude/The echo of my own voice/The beat of my own heart/That way lies death/I want Life/I will greet and meet men!"

Mrs. Madge Hales presents good work in nature-poems (*Winter Landscape, The Tree Speaks, The Shrew*) which are crisp, accurate and firmly controlled, yet, in inferior poems, she seems to enjoy being a poet of the flesh and the dark blood. Consequently, a damning suggests itself. If her work is to develop, a choice between the devout pursuit of the nature-poem realm and the deeper experience of a sincere, if disturbing, sensuality seems almost imperative. Whichever choice is made Mrs. Hales has poetry of an enduring freshness to give us.

Miss Edith M. Kelly, whose verses are carefully sectionalized under nature, love, death, disillusionment, spiritual life, war, in critical vein, in french forms, and other poems, is a poetry-lover to whom the poetry of others and the writing of her own has brought solace.

Mr. Aubrey Lees writes of buildings, beggars, barrel-organs, gardens and trees, and the ring of the lyric note, which he could sing successfully is never far-absent.

In fifteen sonnets Mr. Frederic Vanson is a poet. Inexcusably careless in particular respects of borrowing, punctuation and spelling, he boldly remoulds the traditional sonnet and fearlessly re-presents the Christ-Love. *The Furious Finding* sounds a clarion reveille. Poets, with Muriel Grainger and Frederic Vanson, to whom "the vision splendid" has been vouchsafed, given integrity of speech and of action, are the ones who will create the One World safely. It is their opportunity and their martyrdom.

JOHN HOFFMAN.

The Slow Night: Christopher Hassall (Arthur Barker, 7s. 6d.).

PRESENTING his poems after an interval of eight years, this versatile poet (notable also as biographer, playwright, broadcaster and soldier), Mr. Christopher Hassall, shows technical assurance, fluidity and restraint. These poems fall into three distinct, though unselected groups: the first inclines towards where poet and reader plunge

> "Into the thought of them like a headlong boy
> Diving for pearls, but almost drowned in death
> As in grey fathoms."

And imagery tends to cloy owing to lack of climax and contrast in soporific expression. His longest poem, *The Death of Edward V,*

apart from certain pedestrian stanzas, is well sustained and interesting throughout.

Six selfconscious sonnets, relieved by some magnificent lines and by the lyrical poignancy which ends the humorous *Hats, Demob Depot, York,* comprise the second group.

It is the third group, containing arresting imagery which confirms the belief that here is a poet of insight and awareness: a poet who regards humanity with compassion and humility, and overcomes despair by measuring this life against eternity.

"Then voices calling; and all eyes can see,
(An instantaneous opening of white buds.)
Man's hurt is healed. His loves are recognized."

IRIS BIRTWISTLE.

Colours and Windows: William Wolff (Chaterson Ltd., 5s.).

WHETHER Mr. Wolff has already appreciated that technical innovations alone are insufficient to restore poetry to its eternal tasks of delighting and helping us to understand one another we do not know, although from his lack of them we might assume so, but when we see no ripple at all, through any of these poems, of the breath accompanying man's movement into a dimension beyond the fourth dimension, into the greater dimension of the spirit, then we know that Mr. Wolff has treasures still to reach and to unfold. And it is in this dimension, in unity, that the poets of the world to-day are gathering.

"Around him is his planetary carefulness,
His wife, his children, and his garden bloom.
He has much love for them, but now in fearfulness
He ponders if their laughter will submerge
The voices that from God himself emerge. . ."

Mr. Wolff is dressed almost formally, stands somewhat stiffly, and, it will be recognized, speaks plainly. One is grateful to him for not attempting to say more than he has seen or knows; and his quietness, his correctness, his virtues are noticed. He will be understood by all, enjoyed by many, and praised by a few. But if Mr. Wolff is to achieve more than occasional verse, he may be required to look beyond his cottage-garden to the black figure marching down the hill towards his house, and to ask, and to answer, "Who am I? Who are you? Where are we going?"

JOHN HOFFMAN.